

283 the ground. This disc has two hooks to
413 which the fiber is knotted; when the disc
is turned by a crank, it braids the fibers
into rope. A thick board, smoothed by a
metal knife (manufactured by the Indians
from iron pieces bought in the city), is used
to scrape the pita and remove the fiber.

407 The most complex machine that the Tzel-
[177] tal own and build is the wooden cane press,
which was imported by the Spaniards to
grind sugarcane (fig. 6). This machine is
operated by two men, who move the rollers
by a handle (*kabal-té*) at each end of the
machine. The juice pressed out by the rollers

[415] drops into fluted containers made of pieces
of banana tree, and finally into a pot. This
273 juice is used in the preparation of an alco-
holic beverage, *chicha* (*chi-ja*, 'sweet wa-
ter'), and for panela. Chicha is prepared by

[415] fermenting this juice by bran, corn, or
wheat, in a special container (*canoja*) made
from a fluted tree trunk. The bran or other
fermenting agent is *smé-chi-já* ('mother of
the chicha'). Some communities (Tenejapa,
[184] Cancuc, Oxchuc) have greater preference
for this beverage than other Tzeltal groups.

224 A gun has become very common in hunt-
411 ing. Sometimes (Oxchuc and Tenejapa)
[412] rabbits are taken by striking them with a
coa, after cornering them with the aid of
dogs. Blom and LaFarge (1926-27, 2:352)
state that the Tzeltal of the lowlands usually
hunt wild boar with long wooden spears
with fire-hardened or metal points. Traps
protect the milpa as well as snaring game.

41 Cooking utensils are mainly indigenous.
The usual set consists of clay containers of
varying size and shape, jícaras, baskets,
wooden spoons, a comal, a metate, hooks,
and wooden tripods for hanging items over

177 the fire. In the last few years metal pots,
404 dishes, frying pans, boiling pans, and espe-
415 cially handy *nixtamal* mills (which are
gradually displacing the grinding stone)

177 have been introduced. Other items that
• 207 come from the city are flashlights, small
405 kerosene lamps, watches, scissors, and (in-
412 frequently) battery radios.
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[P 206-B]